

Discover Montana's Delicious Treasures



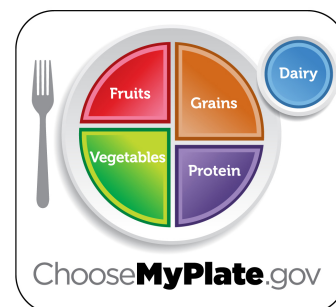
July
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Activity 1 – Learn the Lunch Rainbow

1. Distribute copies of your monthly school lunch menu or show on projector. Display the *Discover Montana's Treasures* poster or MyTray image provided.

2. Introduce activity. In this lesson, students will learn about the food groups from My Plate (or My Tray, the school version). They will learn why eating from each of the food groups is important for maintaining good health

3. Describe MyTray/MyPlate. The MyTray (which is the school version of My Plate) is a guide to show how to build a healthy meal. Adults and children need to eat a variety of foods from each of the food groups in order to receive the different nutrients their bodies need to grow and stay healthy. Think of a healthy meal as the treasure at the end of a rainbow. The poster shows a golden tray to show the treasure, and the five colors in a healthy meal "rainbow." Each food group (section of the tray/color) is important to building a healthy body, ready for play and learning. Now start the exploration!



4. Discuss each of the sections of the tray, which are color-coded for the different food groups: vegetables (green), fruit (red), grains (brown), dairy (blue), protein (purple). Use the poster as a visual aid to show the food group areas.

- Vegetables (green section): Eating vegetables helps keep your body healthy since most vegetables are packed with vitamins and minerals like Vitamins A and C. These vitamins help your vision and fight infections. Also, vegetables are a good source of fiber, which keeps food moving through the digestive system. Not all vegetables have the same amounts of vitamins, so it is important to eat a variety (or a rainbow) of vegetables.
 - Depending on age level, have students write "vegetable" on the blank MyTray handout in the appropriate space.
 - Ask for examples of vegetables. Have students draw one example of a food in that food group in the appropriate space on their MyTray handout.
 - Have students look at the monthly school lunch menu and share some vegetables that are on the menu during the month.
 - Ask students: Are there any orange or red vegetables (carrots, tomatoes, red pepper, squash, sweet potato, etc.)? Dark green? (spinach, romaine lettuce, broccoli, etc.) Any dried beans/peas (black beans, pinto beans, kidney beans, lentils, etc.)? *Note: dried beans/peas, lentils, garbanzo beans, and other legumes can count in either the vegetable or the protein sections.*
 - Count the different types of vegetables on the menu, writing each type on the board or on a piece of paper. Extension: list the vegetables offered and then mark how many times each vegetable was offered in the month. Students can create a chart with the information.
- Fruit (red section): Eating fruits can help heal cuts and bruises as many are good sources of Vitamin C. Just like vegetables, different fruits offer different benefits. Oranges are a good source of Vitamin C, while bananas are packed with potassium. Potassium is needed to keep your heart beating. Many fruits contain folate which is important to keep our blood healthy by helping form red blood cells.

Activity 1 – Learn the Lunch Rainbow (cont.)

- Depending on age level, have students write “fruit” on the blank MyTray handout in the appropriate space.
 - Ask for examples of fruits. Have students draw one example of a fruit in the appropriate space on their MyTray handout.
 - Have students look at the school lunch menu (or read aloud the options) and share some fruits that are on the menu.
 - Ask students: What fruit is your favorite? How many different kinds of fruit are on the menu?
 - Count the different types of fruit on the menu, writing each type on the board or on a piece of paper. Extension: list the types of fruit offered and then mark how many times they are offered to make a chart.
- Grains (brown section):** Grains help give you energy to power through your day. They are also a good source of minerals like iron, magnesium and selenium which help carry oxygen in the blood and maintains a strong immune system. Whole wheat or grain sources provide fiber to keep your digestive system healthy. They also provide several B vitamins, which help us feel energized.
 - Depending on age level, have students write “grains” on the blank MyTray handout in the appropriate space.
 - Ask for examples of grains. Have students draw one example of a grain or grain-based product (ie. wheat or wheat bread) in the appropriate space on their MyTray handout.
 - Have the students look at the menu and share some grains that are on the menu during the month.
 - Ask students: What is the definition of whole grain? Can you find any whole grain choices? What clues can you use to know if it is whole grain?
- Milk (blue section):** Milk and dairy foods, are a good source of calcium, vitamin D, B vitamins and protein that helps make our teeth and bones strong. Some people cannot drink cow or goat milk; there are many non-dairy alternatives such as soy milk, almond milk, coconut milk.
 - Depending on age level, have students write “dairy” on the blank MyTray handout in the appropriate space.
 - Ask for examples of milk products. Have students draw one example of a dairy product in the appropriate space on their MyTray handout.
 - Have the students look at the menu and see what kinds of milk are available each day.
 - Ask students: What kind of milk do you choose at lunch? What else do you eat that contains milk or dairy? (Answers: cheese, yogurt, ice cream, etc.)
- Protein (purple section):** Protein foods contain essential building blocks for our bodies to stay healthy and minerals (iron, zinc, magnesium) along with B Vitamins and Vitamin E. Protein is needed to grow strong muscles. There are many sources of protein including meats, eggs, cheese, yogurt, tofu (soybeans), dried beans/peas, lentils, garbanzo beans, and other legumes. Milk and dairy products are also sources



Activity 1 – Learn the Lunch Rainbow (cont.)

of protein, so they can go in either group.

- Depending on age level, have students write “protein” on the blank MyTray handout in the appropriate space.
 - Ask for examples of proteins. Have students draw one example of a protein rich food in the appropriate space on their MyTray handout.
 - Have the students look at the menu and share some protein rich foods that are on the menu during the month.
 - Ask students: What protein rich foods are your favorite choices?
- Candy and Soda (does not have a section):
 - Ask students: Why is there not a section for candy, soda, and other sugary or high-fat foods like cookies or donuts?
 - These foods may taste good, but do not help our bodies grow and be healthy, so they are foods we only eat sometimes. If we eat too many “sometimes foods” we are not hungry for the foods that our bodies need to help us grow, play, and learn.
 - Encourage students to enjoy a variety of fruits for a sweet treat; and to flavor water with fruit or enjoy a glass of fruit or vegetable juice instead of soda.
 - Whole Tray:
 - Have students look at the tray image.
 - What two colors take up the most space on the tray?
 - Answer: The red and green sections, which are the fruit and vegetables. It is recommended to “Make half your plate fruits and vegetables!” So remember to have at least one or two fruits and vegetables at each meal.

5. Consider incorporating movement into this activity. After each food group explanation, have students create a corresponding dance move to help them remember what foods in that group contribute to a healthy body.